

The Continuing Development of NPOs

The development of NPOs (national productivity organizations) is one of thrust areas of the APO. There are two basic reasons for this. One is that the NPOs are tasked with spearheading the productivity movement in APO member countries, and, two, APO's services to its members are delivered through this network of NPOs. The development and strengthening of the NPOs, therefore, has always been a matter of priority



Participants of the Forum

for the APO. The role of the NPOs has been growing in importance as globalization, liberalization and the IT revolution sweep across the world. In the ensuing competitive business environment, productivity enhancement becomes an even more critical strategy for business and for national economic growth. To effectively meet their expanded role, the NPOs have to be metamorphosed into knowledge-based organizations.

The APO has sponsored a number of programs to speed them on in this process. For instance, in December 2000, a forum on the development of NPOs was held in Singapore where the NPOs were challenged to develop their productivity road maps so

that they know where they were heading, their goals and programs. A similar forum was held this year in Thailand on 18-20 December. Its objectives were i) to provide an opportunity for the NPOs to share their road maps, ii) to explore ways the APO network and resources could be tapped to meet the needs of the NPOs and the member countries, iii) to formulate innovative and pragmatic solutions to meet these needs, and iv) to deliberate on practical approach to convert NPOs into knowledge-based organizations. The Thailand meeting was attended by 20 participants from 14 APO member countries. Excepting for one, all were officials of NPOs. APO Secretary-General Takashi Tajima also sat in at the meeting.

At the 2001 forum, the participants were told that for their road maps to be complete and meaningful they would have to link them to a strategic thrust and to provide for the evaluation of their performance. In planning for all this, they were advised to involve their critical stakeholders.

After having developed their road maps, the next step the participants were told to take is the identification of external and internal barriers and constraints in the NPOs to the realization of the road maps, the assessment of the existing capacities and capabilities of the NPOs, and the determination of needs at the macro and micro levels as well as those of the NPOs. Two successful cases of conversion of an NPO into a knowledge-based organization were studied. The cases came from Singapore and the Republic of China.

On the role of the APO in the development of NPOs, the support and assistance it was requested to provide was to improve NPO capability building through political lobbying, information dissemination and exchange, technical demonstration projects, institutional partnership and networking, training of NPO staff, and providing comparative productivity data, best practice models and infrastructure support. 🌀